

Bright Supports National Defense Authorization Act

WASHINGTON, DC - Last night, the House Armed Services unanimously approved the FY2011 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which authorizes Department of Defense (DOD) spending over the next year. The bill will now head to the full House floor for consideration, which is expected to occur next week. Included in the bill is over \$100 million for military installations in the Second District and the Alabama Army National Guard, which Congressman Bright was proud to secure and support. During a visit to Fort Rucker last year, Secretary Gates emphasized the need for increased Army aviation in order to be successful in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Funding included in the NDAA will help Fort Rucker meet the new requirements DOD has placed on the base. In addition, projects authorized for Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base will improve outdated facilities and ensure its preeminence in combating cyber attacks.

Additionally, H.R. 5136 contains several important policy changes, including providing an age-waiver process for the United States Service Academies, supported and advanced by Congressman Bright.

"The National Defense Authorization Act is a product of bipartisan efforts to ensure that our soldiers and their families are appropriately honored and supported," Bright said. "This bill makes critical investments in our national security and sets the Department of Defense on the right path, which will greatly benefit the American warfighter. I want to thank Chairman Ike Skelton, Ranking Member Buck McKeon, and the Armed Services Committee Staff for their hard work in passing a strong bill for which we can all be proud. I urge its swift consideration by the full House."

in budget authority for the DOD and the national security programs of the Department of Energy (DOE). The bill also authorizes \$159 billion to support overseas contingency operations during fiscal year 2011, and \$34 billion for fiscal year 2010 supplemental appropriations for overseas contingency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Some of the provisions authorized in the NDAA include:

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A 1.9% pay raise for service members, which is .5 above cost-of-living. H.R. 5136 also increases, for the first time in six years, the maximum amount of hostile fire and imminent danger pay and increases family separation allowance for service members.
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\$10.3 billion, \$361.6 million above the budget request, for ballistic missile defense.
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\$345 million to modernize DOD schools.
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\$9.9 billion for Army and Marine Corps equipment reset and depot maintenance and \$4.5 billion for depot maintenance of active and reserve Air Force aircraft.
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\$7.2 billion for the National Guard and Reserve to provide aircraft missiles, wheeled and tracked combat vehicles, ammunition, small arms, tactical radios, and other equipment.
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\$17 million for UH-60 Black Hawk Utility Helicopter upgrades for the Army National Guard (requested by Congressman Bright).
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An additional 7,000 Army troops and 500 Air Force personnel.
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Extension of Tricare beneficiaries' coverage to their dependent children until age 26, the same benefit that was afforded to individuals with private insurance policies under the new health care law.
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An increase in Operation and Maintenance

(O&M) funding to support the daily operations, training, and administration of U.S. military forces at home and abroad.

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Fully funding the DOD Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program and the DOE's nonproliferation programs. This will continue efforts to secure within four years all known vulnerable nuclear material around the world that can be used for weapons.

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A new, semi-annual report on trends and developments in Afghanistan and reports on the progress in stopping the momentum of the Taliban and their allies.

In addition, Congressman Bright was pleased to announce that the NDAA contains language to allow for an age admission waiver for enlisted soldiers who apply to the United States military service academies. Congressman Bright worked with Congressmen Steve Israel (D-NY) and Geoff Davis (R-KY), and in consultation with the Department of Defense, to craft language to provide for the waiver.

Currently, enlisted soldiers cannot enroll in one of the service academies if they turn 23 before July 1 of the year they will enroll. There is no process to grant even highly-qualified enlisted men and women a waiver to enroll in one of the academies. The NDAA provides the secretary of the Army, Navy, and Air Force with waiver authority for enlisted members of the Armed Forces. Each secretary may grant up to five waivers per year for enlistees younger than 26 who were unable to apply to one of the academies due to active duty service in the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan, or for soldiers with "exceptional overall records" as determined by the secretary.

"Even well-qualified enlisted men and women cannot gain access to our service academies if they happen to be 23 or older," Bright said. "This was a glaring oversight that has affected some of my constituents, and a policy that the Department of Defense agreed could be modified. If signed into law, this will allow the academies to accept select brave soldiers who have already served their country but want to continue their education and service at one of academies. This is a sensible change in policy that appropriately honors our best and brightest enlisted men and women in the Armed Services."

Congressman Bright was also proud to secure funding for military installations in the Second District and the Alabama Army National Guard in the NDAA. Projects in the Second District include:

\$13.4 million for the ADAL Air University Library at Maxwell-Gunter AFB

Funds would go towards the construction of a 2-story addition to the Fairchild Research Information Center (AU Library). New construction will include infrastructure improvements. Alteration includes reconfiguration of reader services division, office space, bookstack areas, and upgrade of mechanical, electrical, structural, and fire protection systems. It would also renovate the Air University Press (AUP) to include customer service, editorial services, and design branches, office space, public areas, and upgrade of mechanical, electrical, and fire protection systems.

\$810,000 for Air Traffic Control Tower at Maxwell-Gunter AFB

This project would ultimately construct an eight-story, modern Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) at Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base. Funding included in the NDAA would help Maxwell-Gunter complete its design plans for the tower. The existing ATCT on the base was constructed in 1955. It is the second-oldest ATCT in the entire Air Force. Many changes have occurred at the installation over the years and the current facility no longer meets mission requirements. Additionally, the existing location of the facility does not allow visibility of aircraft ground operations at all times, due to construction of other facilities adjacent to the airfield. It was designed for now-obsolete aircraft missions and is ineffective for the current C-130H mission or future aircraft missions.

\$6.95 million for Application Software Assurance at Maxwell-Gunter AFB

The 2011 Quadrennial Defense Review stressed the need for the Department of Defense to improve activities to protect and defend against cyber attacks. The Air Force has been at the forefront of this effort, establishing the Application Software Assurance Center of Excellence (ASACoE) at Maxwell-Gunter AFB to assess and strengthen its defenses against cyber attacks at the application level. The Air Force has determined there is an immediate need for additional tools, training and subject matter experts to maintain the analysis capability and ensure the security of the people, systems, and equipment that support the warfighter. This funding would provide critical technical support and training enabling the USAF software development community to immediately improve the security posture of both existing and future warfighter support applications.

\$29 million for an Aviation Component Maintenance Shop at Fort Rucker

This project would construct an aviation component maintenance shop at

Fort Rucker to house functions such as avionics testing, repair and calibration activities, electronic automated test equipment, electronics repair, spectrographic analysis, and other functions. Currently, maintenance is being performed in functionally and physically obsolete facilities. The maintenance activity is performed around the clock with only ten non-active days a year. There is no surge capability under current facility constrained operations, which compromises safety and efficiency as well as limiting mission effectiveness.

\$36 million for an Aviation Maintenance Facility at Fort Rucker

This project would construct an Aviation Maintenance Facility with supporting shop, parts storage, avionics, and other facilities. The hangar will contain maintenance bays equipped with overhead bridge cranes, fire alarm/suppression systems, Ground Service Equipment (GSE) covered parking, and integrated mechanical support systems. This project will increase Fort Rucker's ability to meet the Army's aviation readiness requirements during a time in which our troops are serving overseas.

\$1.776 million for an Emergency Medical Services Facility at Fort Rucker

This project would construct an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) facility to house three ambulances. The project is required to provide a permanent, centrally located facility to house the Fort Rucker EMS ambulance service. The Fort Rucker EMS requires special purpose areas to properly conduct its public safety activities. There are no facilities on post which can satisfy the current mission requirements.

\$5 million for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle Virtual Trainers for the Alabama Army National Guard

The Alabama Army National Guard currently has no training device that permits its soldiers to train to operate the new Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) family of combat vehicles. During current operations in Iraq, more soldiers have been killed or wounded by IEDs than by any other weapon. The MRAP Vehicle Virtual Trainer allows soldiers to train to drive these vehicles and to operate cranes and mobile arms to disarm or destroy IEDs without endangering themselves. MRAP Vehicle Virtual Trainers allow combat training on virtual terrain in key areas of Afghanistan and Iraq. Currently, Alabama Army National Guard units do not have a virtual trainer to prepare their soldiers to operate MRAP and M-ATV vehicles, and this funding would help them better prepare and keep them safe when they are deployed.

\$4.65 million for a Training Aids Center at Fort Rucker

Funds would go towards the construction of a standard medium Training Aids Support Center (TSC). Primary facilities include the TSC, installation of intrusion detection system (IDS), building information systems and antiterrorism measures. Supporting facilities include electric service, water, sanitary sewer, and site preparation/improvements.

\$3.2 million for UAS Branch Concept Development at Fort Rucker

The Army Aviation School at Fort Rucker is the lead integrator for all unmanned aircraft and oversees new requirements, innovative technology and defines how best to utilize assets in the full spectrum operations. It serves as the representative on various Office of the Secretary of Defense integrated process teams including airspace, training, facilities, simulations, science and technology, experimentation, intelligence, electronic warfare, frequency, bandwidth protection and spectrum management. The Army Aviation School oversees new requirements, innovative technology and defines how best to utilize assets in the full spectrum operation by fully integrating unmanned aircraft as a system-of-systems on the modern and future battlefields. Funds will be used to staff the UAS Branch with essential personnel to work with DOD, other agencies, and industry stakeholders to facilitate interoperability and system integration.

"I am extremely pleased that vital projects at Maxwell-Gunter and Fort Rucker are included in the committee-passed NDAA," Bright said. "Ensuring military installations in the Second District- and more importantly, the soldiers and airmen stationed there- are provided with the necessary resources is one of the most important jobs I have as a Congressman. Funding included in the NDAA, if signed into law, will make upgrades to key facilities at each installation and help them reach the increased requirements that have been asked of them in recent years. I look forward to working with General Barclay and General Peck in the future to keep these bases some of the best in their respective branches of the military."

"I am also very pleased to secure funding for the Alabama Army National Guard," Bright said. "National Guard and Reserve units around the country have been asked a great deal over the last seven years and this funding will allow our Alabama units to train more effectively before they are deployed. I am confident that MRAP virtual trainers will keep our men and women safer when fighting in hostile territory."